DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 372 036 SP 035 307

AUTHOR Monahan, Thomas C.
TITLE The Usefulness and Motivational Value of Research Methods Courses for Education Professionals.
PUB DATE 11 Feb 94
NOTE 25p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Eastern Educational Research Association (Sarasota, FL, February 11, 1994).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Administrator Attitudes; Course Content; Educational Needs; Educational Research; Elementary Secondary Education; Graduate Study; Higher Education; *Information Utilization; *Methods Courses; Motivation; *Research Methodology; Schools of Education; *Teacher Attitudes; Teacher Behavior; Teacher Education Programs; *User Satisfaction (Information)
IDENTIFIERS Rowan College NJ

ABSTRACT

This study surveyed a sample of 81 former students from the graduate research methods course in the School of Education and Related Professional Studies at Rowan College (New Jersey), between 1985 and 1992. The findings show that while students who have completed a research methods course at the graduate level find the content useful, especially in understanding and evaluating the professional literature, they are not motivated to take additional courses in research or statistics, to learn more about research methodology, or to engage in research on their own. Only one respondent in five reported engaging in any type of research, and within the entire sample, only one individual reported publishing his/her research. Nevertheless, most agreed that teachers need preparation in both research and statistics, that such courses help them to pay more critical attention to articles about research, and that such courses help them to increase the frequency of their use of the professional literature as well as the application of what they read to their professional roles and responsibilities. A copy of the survey form is appended. (JDD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 372 036

THE USEFULNESS AND MOTIVATIONAL VALUE OF RESEARCH METHODS COURSES FOR EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS
MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

T. Monahan

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC).

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Thomas C. Monahan, Acting Dean
Graduate Studies and Sponsored Research
Rowan College
Glassboro, New Jersey

Paper Presentation at the Annual Meeting of the Eastern Educational Research Association, Sarasota, Florida, February 11, 1994

SP035307

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Abstract

The findings of this study show that while students who have completed a research methods course at the graduate level find the content useful, especially in understanding and evaluating the professional literature, they are not motivated to take additional courses in research or statistics, to learn more about research methodology, or to engage in research on their own. Nevertheless, in contrast to earlier studies, most agree that teachers need preparation in both research and statistics, that such courses help them to pay more critical attention to articles about research, and that such courses help them to increase the frequency of their use of the professional literature as well as the application of what they read to their professional roles and responsibilities.

Background

Because of changes in the way in which teachers are prepared, increasing emphasis is being placed on discipline-specific content in contemporary teacher education programs. As a result, many prospective teachers receive little, if any, training in research or statistics as part of their undergraduate education. For many, the first time they are exposed to these important educational skills is when they begin study at the graduate level.

Many researchers have pointed out this serious shortcoming in teacher education over the years. Some have affirmed that teachers generally do not use educational research in the conduct of their professional responsibilities because research is not usually part of their undergraduate training (Fleming, 1988; Rackcliffe, 1988). As was pointed out in Green and Kvidahl (1990), other researchers have found that teachers are untrained in research methods, have negative attitudes toward research in general and under-utilize research (Adams, 1976; Brown, 1976; Green & Kvidahl, 1989; Kaplan, 1976; Rudduck, 1985; Rumstein, 1972; Zahorik, 1984). Research skills are not generally considered to be among the survival techniques teacher education students need to learn (Kaplan, 1976).

The effectiveness of introductory research methods courses taught at any level has rarely been empirically assessed (Green & Kvidahl, 1990). This study sought to determine the extent to which students in a variety of graduate degree programs in education and related professional studies at a mid-size comprehensive public college value and use the skills and techniques they learn in graduate level research methods courses in the conduct of their professional roles as teachers, professional services specialists and administrators.

Research Questions

1. To what extent do students use complex research designs and sampling procedures in their master's level theses?

2. How useful have they found research methods courses in their professional careers?

3. To what extent have the research methods courses motivated educators to seek more advanced training in research or statistics?

4. What evidence exists to demonstrate that research methods courses have motivated students to read the professional literature more frequently and to engage in research projects.

5. What additional skills or training in the broad areas of research or statistics are needed by educators, but which they did not acquire as part of their undergraduate or graduate programs?

Sampling Procedures and Survey Methodology

A systematic random sample of 121 former students in the graduate research methods

course entitled *Procedures and Evaluation in Research* was selected from a population of 351 students enrolled in the course between 1985 and 1992. This course, the only comprehensive offering in research methodology within the School of Education and Related Professional Studies at Rowan College, is required for all students enrolled in graduate degree programs in school administration, supervision, curriculum development, and community college education. It is also a recommended core course for graduate degree students in learning disabilities, special education, and environmental education and conservation. During the period of the study, this course was taught by at least three different instructors. The sample, which represents approximately one-third (34%) of the population, was identified through a systematic random selection process of students enrolled in the courses as identified by the college registrar. It was designed to have a confidence level of 90% and an acceptable margin of error of $\pm$5% (McCall, 1980). Survey (mail) questionnaires were developed, field tested, and distributed to the sample respondents.

Instrumentation

The four page questionnaire used in the study included questions on the characteristics of the respondents such as gender, years of experience in education, degree program, present role in education, and number of professional journals read on a regular basis. Additional questions sought to determine whether respondents had completed a master's degree thesis or some other type of capstone experience, type of research design employed, type of sampling procedures used, the extent to which the content of the research methods course proved useful to respondents, the extent to which exposure to the course motivated respondents to further activity or study, and the extent of agreement-disagreement by respondents with a number of statements related to the study's objectives. Tables 2-6 provide considerably more detail on many of these questions.

Other questions asked respondents to indicate the frequency with which they referred to and applied the professional literature to their jobs, as well as any type of research activity, other than the master's thesis or other capstone project, in which they had engaged and, if so, whether any of their research efforts had been published.

Finally, respondents were asked to identify any skills or knowledge related to research or statistics that they found they now needed as part of their professional obligations but were not offered as part of either their undergraduate or graduate academic preparation.

Sample Characteristics

One hundred and twenty-one surveys were mailed early in the fall 1993. Eighteen surveys were returned as undeliverable, the time for forwarding having expired. The original mailing yielded responses from 44 respondents (36%). A follow-up mailing resulted in an additional 37 completed responses which raised the total of usable responses to 81 (67%). Telephone calls to a small sample (n=7) of non-respondents suggested that no systematic bias was present. Because of the relatively high response rate (67% overall; 79% after accounting for non-deliverable surveys), no additional attempt was made to assess the representativeness of the sample in terms

of their characteristics other than to check the comparability of respondents' genders with known institutional characteristics. This check suggested that the female-male ratio in the respondent sample (i.e., 2:1) was essentially the same as the population ratio as determined from data available in the college's student information system. The characteristics of the respondents are illustrated immediately below.

Table 1
Characteristics of Survey Respondents

Gender	
Female	67%
Male	33
Enrollment in degree program	
School administration	59
Supervision/curriculum	20
Community college education	5
Special education	3
Learning disabilities	1
Environmental education	12
Present role in education	
Classroom teacher	54
Resource room teacher	6
Guidance counselor	1
LDT/C or school psychologist	1
Supervisor	9
Principal or vice principal	13
Other	16
Years of experience in education	
Less than 5 years	9%
5-7 years	9
8-10 years	8
11-15 years	26
16-20 years	27
More than 20 years	21
Number of journals read regularly	
None	4
One	18
Two	33
Three	21
Four	2
Five or more	3

Descriptive Analysis

The survey findings reveal that 61% of the respondents had completed their master's thesis or other capstone project. Twenty-one percent of those students had completed a traditional master's thesis, and 75% had completed an internship experience, culminating in a comprehensive report including analyses and evaluation of mini-projects in curriculum, teaching and learning, personnel administration, organization and management, utilization of staff, and routine

administrative tasks. Another 4% reported they had completed some other culminating or capstone project.

Five percent of the respondents reported they had used a true experimental design in their thesis study or other capstone project, and only 4% used a quasi-experimental design. Thirty-two percent of the respondents used an historical design, and 14% used an ethnographic design. Six percent of the respondents used an ex post facto design, and 38% used a survey design.

One-third (33%) of the respondents reported they had employed some type of sampling procedures in their thesis study or other capstone project. Eleven percent reported using simple random sampling, 4% reported using systematic random sampling, 6% reported using cluster sampling, and the remaining 12% reported using some combination of the above.

Usefulness of Course Content

Nearly all respondents reported the content of their courses in research methods was *very useful* or *useful* in helping them to understand and critically evaluate the research literature and to engage in research projects. Table 2 illustrates the extent to which respondents reported such usefulness and further suggests that the course content was also useful in helping some respondents to apply research findings in classroom activities and to use statistics in educational research.

Exposure to Research Methods Course

Relatively few respondents reported that exposure to their research methods courses had motivated them to other activities in selected areas of research. Table 3 shows that most respondents were not motivated to take additional courses in either research or statistics. The table further shows that only a limited number of respondents were motivated to learn more about research methodology, to engage in research projects on their own, or to seriously consider further academic study.

Value of Research Methods Course

The data in Table 4 suggest that there were a number of valuable effects of the respondents' exposure to their research methods courses. There was general agreement by a majority of respondents that the courses enabled them to obtain a better understanding of the role of research in education, to pay increased attention to articles in the news media about research studies, to overcome a fear of research and statistics, to read the professional literature with a more critical eye, to read an increased number of professional journals, and to increase the use of research concepts in their professional roles. The majority of respondents further reported general agreement that courses in research and statistics should be required in undergraduate and graduate teacher education programs.

Table 2
Extent of Usefulness of the Content of Research Methods Course (Percent)

	Very Useful	Moderately Useful	Not Useful	Don't Know or Not Applicable
Understanding research literature	65	31	3	1
Critically evaluating research literature	55	40	1	4
Engaging in research projects	51	38	4	8
Using statistics in educational research	28	43	19	11
Applying research findings to classroom activities	36	41	15	8

Table 3
Extent to Which Research Methods Course Motivated Interest (Percent)

	Very Much	Much	Somewhat	Not at all	Don't Know
Learning more about research methods	11	19	48	21	2
Taking additional courses in research	7	7	29	56	3
Taking additional courses in statistics	3	3	27	67	1
Seriously considering study for higher academic degree	14	21	26	38	1
Engaging in research projects	11	20	43	24	3

Table 4
Extent of Agreement-Disagreement (Percent)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
I am no longer afraid of research or statistics	21	69	9	0	2
A course in research methods should be required in every undergraduate teacher education program	33	55	6	1	5
A course in statistics should be required in every undergraduate teacher education program	19	44	28	1	9
Because of the course, I better understand the role of research in education	43	51	5	1	0
I use what I learned in the course in my present professional role	15	49	34	1	1
I read an increased number of professional journals	20	45	29	1	5
Now I pay more attention than before to magazine or newspaper articles about research studies	34	53	13	0	1
I approach most of the professional literature I read now with a more critical eye	44	46	9	0	1

Eighty-one percent of the respondents reported that, as a result of their exposure to the course, they referred *very often* or *often* to professional journals for information on a topic of interest. Moreover, another 80% reported that they *very often* or *often* apply what they read in the professional journals to their jobs.

Slightly more than one-fifth of the respondents (21%) reported that, since their completion of their master's thesis or other capstone project, they had engaged in at least one research study. The types of such studies are reported in Table 5. Only 1% of the respondents, however, reported that the results of their research studies had been published.

Table 5
Types of Research Efforts Undertaken by Respondents

Type	*Frequency*
Feasibility study for a foreign language program in high school	1
Early Warning Test or other standardized test analysis	3
Feasibility study for establishing fiber optic connection in county schools	1
Study to determine if deferring judgement in brainstorming sessions has a relationship to the fluency of ideas	1
Survey research on a developmental kindergarten program	1
Research on the reform of principal preparation programs	1
Quasi-experimental research on the effects of traditional vs. non-traditional reading methodologies	1
Designing a 3-5 year technology plan for a small elementary school	1
Research on academic credentialing	1
Research on student knowledge of the use or abuse of drugs and alcohol	2
Research on student self-esteem	
Research on the effects of heterogeneous vs. homogeneous grouping in an elementary mathematics class	1
Research on communication in annual reports of philanthropic foundations	1
Research on student retention in community colleges	1
Research on urban learners (published)	1

Recommendations for Revisions to Academic Programs

Respondents were asked to identify skills and knowledge related to research or statistics that they found were now needed in their professional jobs, but for which they received no training in their undergraduate or graduate academic preparation. A listing of their recommendations is provided immediately below.

Table 6
Recommendations for Revisions to Academic Programs

Type	*Frequency*
Provide additional statistical training	6
Provide training in computerized statistical programs	5
More application of research results, less methods and design	5
Undergraduate courses in research and statistics	4
Provide a course on grant writing	2
Understanding and critically analyzing quantitative and qualitative studies	1
More concentration on how to review the literature	1
Provide training on how to read charts and graphs in research	1
Provide a course in tests and measurement	1
Spend more time on designing qualitative studies	1

Inferential Analyses

Several inferential analyses were conducted, including a two-sample chi-square for independence, t-tests on independent samples, and multiple stepwise linear regression.

Two-sample chi-square test for independence

Several different contingency analyses were run. Questions regarding the usefulness of the research methods course content, the extent to which such courses were motivational, and the extent of agreement-disagreement on a number of statements were cross-tabulated with questions regarding gender, years of educational experience, number of professional journals regularly read, and the frequency of references to and application of what is read in the professional journals. Of all the cross-tabulations that were run, only four were found to be of interest.

Respondents who read between 1-3 professional journals were most likely to agree that a research methods course should be required in undergraduate teacher education programs [X^2 (15,n=77)=28.88, p=.016]. Similarly, respondents who read between 1-3 journals were most likely to agree that they used what they learned in their research methods courses in their present professional roles [X^2 (15,n=80)=31.04, p=.008]. Respondents who frequently referred to the professional journals for information on a topic of interest were most likely to agree that they now approached the professional literature with a more critical eye [X^2 (6,n=79)=17.50, p=.007]. Finally, respondents who frequently applied what they read in the professional journals to their jobs were most likely to agree that a research methods course should be required in undergraduate teacher education programs [X^2 (9,n=76)=33.27, p=.000].

T-tests of independent samples

A series of t-tests was conducted to determine if statistically significant differences exist within the sample based on selected classifying variables. Respondents were arranged by grouping those who had responded that they found their research methods courses *very useful* or

useful and those who reported that their courses were *not useful*. Respondents were also arranged by grouping those who had responded *very much* or *much* and *somewhat* or *not at all* to questions regarding the extent to which they were motivated by their research methods courses. Respondents were further arranged by grouping those who had responded that they *strongly agree* or *agree* and those who had responded they *disagree* or *strongly disagree* with a variety of statements. Respondents were further arranged by grouping those who had responded that they regularly read between 1-3 or four or more professional journals. Finally, respondents were arranged by grouping them according to gender and years of experience in education. These data have been tabulated and are presented in Tables 7-12.

In Table 7, the relationship between the frequency and the caution with which respondents approach the professional literature is statistically significant at the p=.01 level. Those who agreed that they approached the professional literature with a more critical eye than previously (Group 1) were found to refer to the professional literature more frequently for information on topics of interest than their colleagues who did not approach the literature as cautiously (Group 2).

Table 8 shows that the relationship between the frequency with which respondents refer to the professional literature and the extent to which the content of their research methods courses served them in their professional roles is statistically significant at the p=.000 level. Those who agreed that they used what they learned in their courses in their present professional roles (Group 1) were found to refer to the professional literature more frequently than their colleagues who disagreed that they used what they had learned in the courses in their present professional roles (Group 2).

The relationship between what students learned in their research methods courses and what they read in the professional literature and the connection of both to their present professional roles is demonstrated in Table 9. Respondents who agreed that they use what they learned in their courses (Group 1) were found also to significantly (p=.000) more frequently apply what they read in the research literature to their jobs than do those who disagreed that they use what they learned in their courses (Group 2).

In Table 10, the relationship between gender and motivation to increase statistical knowledge is statistically significant at the p=.014 level. Males (Group 2) were shown to be slightly more motivated than their female colleagues (Group 1) to take an additional course in statistics. However, it is important to note that the data suggest that neither males nor females were very motivated to take such courses.

Finally, Table 11 shows that the relationship between years of experience in education and the usefulness of the course content in assisting in applying research to class activities is statistically significant at the p=.001 level. Those respondents with 10 or more years of experience in education (Group 2) were more likely to feel that what they learned in their research methods courses was helpful in applying research findings to the classroom than were their colleagues with less than 10 years of experience in education (Group 1).

Table 7

	Group 1[2]			Group 2[3]					
	N	Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.	t	df	p value
Frequency[1] of reference to professional journals for information on a topic of interest.	72	1.81	.74	7	2.57	.79	-2.59	77	.012

[1] Mean value scale 1-4, from (1) *very often* to (4) *never.*
[2] Respondents who *strongly agree* or *agree* that they now approach the professional literature with a more critical eye.
[3] Respondents who *disagree* or *strongly disagree* that they now approach the professional literature with a more critical eye.

Table 8

	Group 1[2]			Group 2[3]					
	N	Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.	t	df	p value
Frequency[1] of reference to professional journals for information on a topic of interest.	52	1.64	.63	27	2.33	.83	-4.19	77	.000

[1] Mean value scale 1-4, from (1) *very often* to (4) *never.*
[2] Respondents who *strongly agree* or *agree* that they use what they learned in the course in their present professional roles.
[3] Respondents who *disagree* or *strongly disagree* that they use what they learned in the course in their present professional roles.

Table 9

	Group 1[2]			Group 2[3]					
	N	Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.	t	df	p value
Frequency[1] of application of what is read in the professional journals to respondents' jobs.	52	1.67	.65	27	2.44	.70	-4.89	77	.000

[1] Mean value scale 1-4, from (1) *very often* to (4) *never*.
[2] Respondents who *strongly agree* or *agree* that they use what they learned in the course in the present professional roles.
[3] Respondents who *disagree* or *strongly disagree* that they use what they learned in the course in their present professional roles.

Table 10

	Group 1[2]			Group 2[3]					
	N	Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.	t	df	p value
Extent[1] to which research methods courses motivated to take additional courses in statistics.	71	3.70	.55	5	3.00	.12	2.53	74	.014

[1] Mean value scale 1-4, from (1) *very much* to (4) *not at all*.
[2] Female respondents
[3] Male respondents

Table 11

	Group 1[2]			Group 2[3]					
	N	Mean	S.D.	N	Mean	S.D.	t	df	p value
Usefulness[1] of research methods course content in helping to apply research findings to class activities.	20	2.50	1.1	61	1.75	.77	3.43	79	.001

[1] Mean value scale 1-4, from (1) *very useful* to (4) *not useful.*
[2] Respondents who reported 10 years or less of educational experience.
[3] Respondents who reported more than 10 years of educational experience.

Multiple linear stepwise regression

Several multiple linear stepwise regression analyses were conducted using (a) the extent to which respondents found their research methods courses useful, (b) the extent to which exposure to such courses motivated them, and (c) the extent of agreement-disagreement on selected statements as the dependent variables. Gender, years of educational experience, degree program, present job, number of professional journals regularly read, and frequency of reference and application of what is read in the professional literature served as the independent (predictor) variables.

Of all the regression analyses run, only two appear to be of any interest. First, general agreement that undergraduate teacher education programs should require a statistics course could be validly predicted only by frequency of reference to the professional literature on a topic of interest ($R=.254$, $R^2=.065$, $F(69)=4.69$, $p=.034$). This analysis suggests that those respondents who agree that undergraduate teacher education programs need a course in statistics also tend to refer frequently to the professional literature. Second, general agreement that respondents tend now (presumably as a result of their exposure to the research methods course) to approach the professional literature with a more critical eye could be validly predicted only by frequency of reference to the professional literature on a topic of interest ($R=.357$, $R^2=.128$, $F(74)=10.68$, $p=.001$). This analysis suggests that those who agree they read the professional literature with a more critical eye also tend to refer more frequently to the professional literature. The statistical significance of these models notwithstanding, it is important to note that in both cases, the R^2 statistic explained less than 7% and 13% respectively of the variance in the dependent variable distribution.

The ability to predict values on the dependent variables based on gender, years of educational experience, degree program, present job, number of professional journals regularly read, and the frequency of application of what is read in the literature to one's present job was shown to be insignificant.

Discussion

The vast majority of respondents in this study are classroom or resource room teachers preparing for jobs in school administration or are former teachers who have already secured positions as supervisors, assistant principals, or principals. Because of the nature of their degree programs in school administration, these respondents are or were not required to complete traditional (i.e., research) master's degree theses. Instead, many were required to complete a multi-faceted internship experience, a comprehensive report of which represented their capstone project. This accounts for the large number of respondents who reported using qualitative or survey type designs, rather than true experimental, quasi-experimental or ex post facto designs. It further helps to explain why relatively few students reported using any type of random sampling design.

The sample data suggest that respondents generally found the content of their research

methods courses to be useful in their professional roles, especially with regard to their understanding and critically reviewing the research literature. Nevertheless, while several of the analyses illustrate that many respondents believe that courses in research and statistics should be required in teacher education programs, their experience with their own graduate level research methods courses did not motivate them to take additional courses in either research methodology or statistics. Moreover, while many respondents reported that their courses were useful in helping them to engage in research projects, few respondents reported that they were motivated to do so. In fact, only one respondent in five reported engaging in any type of research, and within the entire sample, only one individual reported that his/her research was published.

The sample data seems further to clarify some of the earlier studies which suggested that teachers generally do not use educational research in the conduct of their professional responsibilities (Fleming, 1988; Rackcliffe,1988), have negative attitudes about research in general and under-utilize research (Adams, 1976; Brown, 1976; Green & Kvidahl, 1989; Kaplan, 1976; Rudduck, 1985; Rumstein, 1972; Zahorik, 1984), or that research skills are not generally considered to be among the survival techniques teacher education students need to learn (Kaplan, 1976). This study's findings suggest that teachers do use both what they learn in their research methods courses and what they read in the professional literature in their present roles. Moreover, it appears that a relationship exists among the frequency with which respondents refer to the literature, the extent to which they read the literature with a more critical eye, and the frequency with which they apply what they read to their jobs. Furthermore, in contrast to earlier studies, this study suggests that teachers have neither a negative attitude about research nor consider it unimportant for survival. Rather, they find research useful and believe that courses in both research and statistics should be required as part of the preparation of teachers.

In summary, this study has found that while students who have completed a research methods course at the graduate level find the content useful, especially in understanding and evaluating the professional literature, they are not motivated to take additional courses in research or statistics, to learn more about research methodology, or to engage in research on their own. Nevertheless, most agree that teachers need preparation in both research and statistics, that such courses help them to pay more critical attention to articles about research, and that such courses help them to increase the frequency of their use of the professional literature as well as the application of what they read to their professional roles and responsibilities. These findings notwithstanding, readers are cautioned that, given the limited sample of this study, the generalizability of its findings are correspondingly limited.

Resources

Adams, R.D. (1976, April). Strategies for more effectively interpreting and utilizing educational research findings: Implications for professional educators. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Education.

Brown, J.D. (1976). Educational research and practice: A literature review. Journal of Teacher Education, 27, 77-79.

Fleming, D. (1988, April). The literature on teacher utilization of research: Implications for the school reform movement. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA.

Green, K.D. & Kvidahl, R.F. (1989, April). Teachers as researchers. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA.

Green, K.D. & Kvidahl, R.F. (1989, April). Research methods courses and post-bachelor's education: effects on teachers' research use and opinions. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Boston, MA.

Kaplan, L. (1976). Survival talk for educators--the teacher as researcher. Journal of Teacher Education, 27, 67.

Rackcliffe, G. (1988, April). Obstacles to teacher use of the knowledge base for school reform. Paper presented at the Annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans.

Rudduck, J. (1985). Teacher research and research-based teacher education. Journal of education for Teaching, 11, 281-289.

Rumstein, R. (1972). Teachers' evaluation of research findings in educational psychology. California Journal of Educational Research, 13, 71-82.

Zahorik, J.A. (1984). Can researchers adopt research findings? Journal of Teacher Education, 35, 34-36.

APPENDIX A

GRADUATE STUDENT SURVEY ON INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH METHODS COURSES

Directions:

Please respond to each of the following questions. Return the completed questionnaire in the self-addressed response envelope that is provided.

1. Have you completed your thesis, internship report, or other final project paper requirement for the award of your master's degree? (Mark only one)

_____ yes _____ no (Skip to question 5)

2. As part of the requirements for the award of your master's degree, which of the following did you have to complete? (Mark only one)

_____ thesis _____ internship report _____other final project paper

3. In your thesis, internship report, or other final project paper, which of the following study designs did you employ? (Mark all that apply)

_____ true experimental design, e.g., pre/post control group
(please specify design format_____)
_____ quasi-experimental design, e.g. pre/post non-equivalent group
(please specify design format_____)
_____ historical
_____ ethnographic
_____ survey
_____ ex post facto
_____ other

4. In your thesis, internship report, or other final project paper, which of the following sampling designs did you employ? (Mark all that apply)

_____ none, I did not employ sampling in my data collection effort
_____ simple random sampling
_____ stratified random sampling
_____ systematic random sampling
_____ cluster sampling

5. To what extent did you find the <u>content</u> of your course on research methods useful in the following? (Mark one response for each item)

	Very Useful	Moderately Useful	Not Useful	Don't Know or Not Applicable
understanding the research literature	1	2	3	4
critically evaluating the research literature	1	2	3	4
engaging in research projects	1	2	3	4
using statistics in educational research	1	2	3	4
applying research findings to classroom activities	1	2	3	4

6. To what extent did your exposure to the course on research methods motivate your interest in the following? (Mark one response for each item.)

	Very Much	Much	Somewhat	Not at all	Don't know
learning more about research methodology	1	2	3	4	5
taking additional courses in research	1	2	3	4	5
taking additional courses in statistics	1	2	3	4	5
seriously considering study for a higher academic degree	1	2	3	4	5
engaging in research projects	1	2	3	4	5

7. Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. (Mark one response for each item)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
I am no longer afraid of research or statistics.	1	2	3	4	5
A course in research methods should be required in every undergraduate teacher education program.	1	2	3	4	5
A course in statistics should be required in every undergraduate teacher education program.	1	2	3	4	5
Because of the course, I better understand the role of research in education.	1	2	3	4	5
I use what I learned in the course in my present professional role.	1	2	3	4	5
I read an increased number of professional journals.	1	2	3	4	5
Now I pay more attention than before to magazine or newspaper articles about research studies.	1	2	3	4	5
I approach most of the professional literature I read now with a more critical eye.	1	2	3	4	5

8. How often do you refer to professional journals for information on a topic of interest to you? (Mark only one)

_____ very often
_____ often
_____ not very often
_____ never

9. How often do you apply what you have read in professional journals to your job? (Mark only one)

_____ very often
_____ often
_____ not very often
_____ never

10. Since you completed your research methods course, have you engaged in any kind of research study?

_____ No _____ Yes (If yes, please describe briefly)

11. Since you completed your research methods course, have you engaged in any research that has been published anywhere?

_____ No _____Yes (If yes, please describe briefly)

12. What kind of skills or training related to research and/or statistics do you find that you need now, but were not provided as part of your undergraduate and/or graduate program(s) at Rowan College?

If would be very helpful to us if you provided the following information.

13. What is your gender? _____ female _____ male

How many years of professional experience do you have in the field of education? (Mark only one)

_____ Less than five
_____ 5-7
_____ 8-10
_____ 11-15
_____ 16-20
_____ more than 20

14. In which of the following graduate programs are or were you enrolled? (***Note:*** *If you were in more than one program, please mark only the program in which you earned the master's degree.)*

_____ school administration
_____ supervision and curriculum development
_____ community college education
_____ special education
_____ learning disabilities
_____ other (please specify:_____)

15. Which of the following best characterizes your present role in education? (Mark only one)

_____ classroom teacher
_____ resource room teacher
_____ guidance counselor
_____ supervisor
_____ LDT/C or school psychologist
_____ principal or vice principal
_____ superintendent or assistant superintendent
_____ other (please specify:_____)
_____ I am no longer involved in education

16. How many professional journals do you presently read on a fairly regular basis? (Mark only one)

_____ none
_____ one
_____ two
_____ three
_____ four
_____ five or more

May I have your current name and address? *(This is for purposes of future follow-up only.)*

Thank you very much for your cooperation in this survey.